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JAMES LOGAN ON DEFENSIVE WAR, OR PENNSYLVANIA POLITICS IN 1741.

It must be evident to any one familiar with the history of Pennsylvania, that William Penn could not have exercised all the authority given him by the Royal charter without violating the principles of the Society of Friends. He was empowered to raise a militia for the protection of the province, and to act as "a captain general of the Army." The granting of these powers is evidence that it was expected that he would be obliged to use them. There can be no doubt that Penn hoped to govern in such a way as to avoid having recourse to extreme measures. The generous terms, however, which he offered to settlers drew many to his province who were not from principle opposed to war. The Quaker element was at first greater than any other, and directed the policy of the government, but, under Fletcher, who represented the crown, the influence of Churchmen and others began to be noticed. Before the beginning of the 18th Century, the importance of the Colony had so increased as to necessitate the appointment of Crown officers. The number of inhabitants outside of the Society of Friends were soon in a majority, but the Quakers continued to exercise considerable influence until it was thought necessary to put the Colony into a condition of defence. They were then obliged either to retire from active participation in public affairs, or to sanction, by their presence, measures which they could not approve. It was while the Friends formed a majority of the Assembly, and refused to pass the defensive laws, for which the people were clamoring, that James Logan wrote the following letter to the Yearly Meeting. Approving of defensive war himself, he argued that opposition to the measures which were popularly demanded could not long continue successful, and advised all Friends who could not vote for warlike measures to decline election to the Assembly. Coming from so prominent a person as James Logan, these views have a special significance. He was not an influential member of the Society of Friends in religious affairs, but his long connection with the Society, and his prominence with the provincial government, gave his opinion weight with the members generally and throughout the community. The supposition that his views regarding defensive war were entertained by many connected with the meetings, is contrary to the entire subsequent history of the Friends in Pennsylvania. That Logan as a Quaker was alone in these views, seems hardly possible, and the letter must be regarded as a chapter in the secret history of the Colony. It is no doubt the address which Franklin says Logan sent to the Meeting in favor of defensive war, but, from the context of Franklin's Autobiography, the reader would suppose the address was written in 1748.

An amusing account of the reception of the letter by the yearly meeting

will be found in the following extract from the correspondence between Richard Peters and John Penn, and the printed copy of Logan's letter which we have used is probably the very one which Peters sent to Penn.

Extract of a Letter from Richard Peters to John Penn,
20 *Octo.* 1741.

The Yearly Meeting being held the week before the general Election, M^r^ Logan by his son Will^m^ sent them a Lre wherein he is said to enlarge on the defenceless State of the Province & of the ill Consequences that may ensue on Men of their Principles procuring themselves to be return'd to Assembly, but his good Design was eluded by the following Expedient, Some Members moved that a Comittee might be appoint^d^ to peruse the Lre & to report whether it contain'd matters proper to be communicated to the Meeting at large, accordingly Rob^t^ Jordan Jno. Bringhouse Ebenezer Large John Dillwin, & Rob^t^ Strethill were appointed to inspect the Epistle & report whether it contain'd Matters wch were fit for the Meeting to take into Consideration; On Examination they reported that the Lre containing Matters of a Military & Geographical Nature it was by no means proper to be read to the general Meeting, but some Persons who understood those Matters might be desir'd to consider and answer it. Rob^t^ Strethil singly declared that considering y^t^ Lre came from one who was known to have had abundance of Experience was an old Member, and had a sincere affection for the Welfare of the Society, he was apprehensive should this Lre be refus'd a reading in the Meeting, such a procedure would not only disgust him but the Body of Friends in England especially as it might be supposed to contain several Things that were intended for the Good of the Society at these fickle & precarious Times. But Jn^o^ Bringhouse pluck'd him by the Coat and told him with a sharp Tone of Voce, Sit Thee down Robert, thou art single in that opinion. M^r^ Logan in Resentment as I suppose of such Treatment caused Thirty copies to be Printed off, to save the Trouble of Copying with a design to send them to his Friends in England, but whether he will or no it is now doubtful tho' I will persuade him if possible to send one to the Proprietrs. It is said, but I advance this without knowing anything from him of the matter, that either by the persuasion of M^rs^ Logan or in a Conference that was had at his house with some of the principal Members of the Meeting, he has alter'd his mind, keeps the Contents a Secret and is dispos'd to suppress the whole, however he has p'mis'd the Gov^r^ Mr. Allen & myself the reading of it but, under Secrecy at this time which I can't acc't for.

To ROBERT JORDAN, *and others the Friends of the Yearly Meeting for Business, now conven'd in* PHILADELPHIA.

My FRIENDS,

It is with no small Uneasiness that I find myself concerned to apply thus to this Meeting: But as I have been longer and more deeply engaged in Affairs of Government, and I believe I may safely say, have considered the Nature of it more closely than any Man besides in this Province; as I have also from my Infancy been educated in the Way that I

have ever since walked in, and I hope without Blemish to the Profession; I conceive and hope you will think I have a Right to lay before you, the heavy Pressure of Mind that some late Transactions in this small Government of ours have given me, through an Apprehension, that not only the Reputation of Friends, as a People, but our Liberties and Privileges in general may be deeply affected by them.

But on this Head I think fit to mention, in the first Place, That when, above *Forty-two* Years since, our late Proprietor proposed to me at *Bristol*, to come over with him as his Secretary; after I had, agreeably to his Advice, taken Time to consider of it, which I did very closely before I engaged, I had no Scruple to accept of that, or of any other Post I have since held: Being sensible, that as Government is absolutely necessary amongst Mankind, so, tho' all Government, as I had clearly seen long before, is founded on Force, there must be some proper Persons to administer it; I was therefore the more surprised, when I found my Master, on a particular Occasion in our Voyage hither, tho' coming over to exercise the Powers of it here in his own Person, shew'd his Sentiments were otherwise.[1] But as I have ever endeavoured to think and act consistently myself, observing Friends had laid it down as their Principle, That Bearing of Arms, even for Self-Defence, is unlawful; being of a different Opinion in this Respect, tho' I ever condemned offensive War, I therefore, in a great Measure, declined that due Attendance on their Meetings of Business, which I might otherwise have given. I must here nevertheless add further, that I propose not, in offering this, to advance Arguments in Support of the Lawfulness of Self-Defence; which, amongst those, who, for Conscience Sake, continue in a Condition to put strictly in

[1] Logan no doubt here alludes to the anecdote related in Franklin's autobiography, that when the vessel on which Penn came to America in 1699, was supposed to be in danger of an attack from one belonging to a hostile nation, Penn and his companions retired to the cabin, but that Logan remained on deck prepared to resist the enemy. For this conduct Logan was subsequently taken to task by Penn, and feeling piqued reminded the latter that his remonstrance did not come until all danger was passed.—Ed.

Practice the Precepts of our Saviour, would be altogether needless; but wherever there is private Property, and Measures taken to increase it, by amassing Wealth, according to our Practice, to a Degree that may tempt others to invade it, it has always appeared to me, to be full as justifiable to use Means to defend it when got, as to acquire it. Notwithstanding which, I am sensible our Friends have so openly and repeatedly professed their Principles on that Head to the Government, and they have thereupon been so much distinguished by its Favours, as a peaceable People, from whom no Plots or Machinations of any Kind are to be fear'd, that I shall consider this, as I have said, to be their standing and avowed Principle, and only offer to your Consideration, what I conceive to be a clear Demonstration, that all Civil Government, as well as Military, is founded on Force; and therefore, that Friends, as such, in the Strictness of their Principles, ought in no manner to engage in it: As also that as we are a subordinate Government, and therefore accountable to a superiour One for our Conduct, it is expected by that Superiour, that this Province, as well as all the other *British* Colonies, shall make the best Defence, against a foreign Enemy, in its Power, as it was strictly required to do by the late Queen, in the last *French* War, upon which the then Governor raised a Militia of three Companies of Voluntiers but for Want of a Law for its Support, it dropt in about two Years after; and the like Orders may undoubtedly be expected again, when another War with *France* breaks out, which is said now to appear unavoidable: That it is of the greater Importance to *Britain*, as it is, for other Reasons, most assuredly to ourselves, that the Country should be defended, as it lies in the Heart of the other *British* Colonies on the Main: And that it is well known in *Europe*, that from the vast Conflux of People yearly into it, from *Germany* and *Ireland*, Numbers, who can bear Arms, are not wanting for a Defence, were there a Law for it, as there is in all the other *British* Colonies, I think, without Exception.

That all Government is founded on Force, and ours as well as others, will be indisputably evident from this: King

Charles II. in his Grant of this Province to our Proprietor, directed, that the Laws of *England*, for the Descent of Lands, and for the Preservation of the Peace, should continue the same till alter'd by the Legislative Authority; and our Government continues still on the same Plan, with Judges, Justices, Sheriffs, Coroners, Clerks, Juries, &c. all of whom, who act by Commissions, have them from the Governor in the *English* Form; the *English* Law is pleaded in all our Courts, and our Practitioners copy, as near as they can, after the Practice of *Westminster-Hall.* By that Law, when the Peace is commanded, even by a Constable, all Obedience to that Command manifestly arises from a Sense in the Person or Persons commanded, that his Resistance would be punished, and therefore they chuse to avoid it: But in Civil Cases of more Importance, the Sheriff, who is the principal executive Officer, executes the Judgments of the Courts upon those they were given against, which they are obliged to comply with, how much soever against their Will; for here also they know Resistance would be in vain, or if they attempt any, the Sheriff is obliged by the Law, without any Manner of Excuse, to find a sufficient Force, if to be had in his County, to compel to a Compliance. And in the Pleas of the Crown, besides that he is obliged to put to Death such Criminals as by the Law have been condemned to it, he, as general Conservator of the Peace, is likewise invested, by the same Law, with proper Powers for suppressing all Tumults, Riots, Insurrections and Rebellions, on whatsoever Occasion they may arise, as far as the whole Posse or Force of his County will enable him; and for this End he receives, together with his Commission, the King's Writ of Assistance, requiring all Persons within his District to be aiding to him, in these and all other Cases; by which, if Need be, they may freely use Fire-Arms, and all Manner of destructive Weapons; and are not at all accountable, by the Law, for any Lives they may take of those in the Opposition, any more than a Man is, on the High-Road, for killing another who attempts to rob him; and such as refuse to assist the Sheriff, are by the same Law, liable to Fine and Imprisonment: From whence it is evident,

there is no Difference, in the last Resort, between Civil and Military Government; and that the Distinction that some affect to make, between the Lawfulness of the one and of the other, is altogether groundless. As no Man is kill'd in the Field, so none are punished, with their Good-will; a superiour Force is employed in the one Case as well as in the other; and the only Difference that I have been ever able to discover in their Essentials, is, that the Sheriff being but one Person in his County, cannot possibly assemble any very great Number together, in any regular Method or Order, as in Case of any Insurrection in the City of *Philadelphia* would soon appear; but on the contrary, in a regular Militia, every Person knows his Commanding Officer, and whither to repair on a proper Call. And from these Premises it certainly follows, that whoever can find Freedom in himself, to join in Assembly in making Laws, as particularly for holding of Courts, is so far concerned in Self-Defence; and makes himself essentially as obnoxious to Censure, as those who directly vote for it.

But further it is alledged, that King *Charles* II. very well knew our Proprietor's Principles when he granted him these Powers of Government, contained in the Charter: To which 'tis answer'd, that amongst the other Powers granted to the Proprietor and his Deputies, He is created by the Charter a Captain General, with Power to levy War on any People not in Amity with the Crown of *England;* which in case he was not free to do by himself, he might by his Deputies; and if he were invested with Powers to make an invasive War, much more it was to be expected that he should defend his Country against all Invaders. And I am a Witness, that in those two Years, or somewhat less, that the Proprietor took the Administration on himself, when last here, He found himself so embarassed between the indispensable Duties of Government on the one Hand, and his Profession on the other, that he was determined, if he had staid, to act by a Deputy. It is further alledged, by our Friends, that no other was expected than that this should be a Colony of *Quakers*, and it is so reputed to this Day; that they are willing them-

selves to rely on the sole Protection of divine Providence, and others who would not do the same should have kept out of it, for no-body called or invited them. But it is answered to this, That the King's Charter gives free Leave to all his Subjects, without Distinction, to repair to the Country and settle in it, and more particularly, the Proprietor's own Invitation was general and without Exception; and by the Laws he had pass'd himself, no Country, no Profession whatever, provided they own'd a God, were to be excluded. That 'tis true our Friends at first made a large Majority in the Province; yet they are said now to make, on a moderate Computation, not above one Third of the Inhabitants. That altho' they alledge they cannot for Conscience-sake bear Arms, as being contrary to the peaceable Doctrine of JESUS (whose own Disciples nevertheless are known to have carried Weapons) yet, without Regard to others of CHRIST'S Precepts, full as express, against laying up Treasure in this World, and not caring for to-morrow, they are as intent as any others whatever in amassing Riches, the great Bait and Temptation to our Enemies to come and plunder the Place; in which Friends would be far from being the only Sufferers, for their Neighbours must equally partake with them who therefore, by all means desire a Law for a Militia, in a regular Manner to defend themselves and the Country, as they have in the other Colonies. That in the last *French* War, *Pensilvania* was but an inconsiderable Colony; but now, by its extended Commerce, it has acquired a very great Reputation; and particularly that *Philadelphia* has the Name of a rich City, is known to have no manner of Fortification, and is, as has been said, a tempting Bait by Water from the Sea; and by Land, the whole Country lies exposed to the *French*, with whom a War is daily expected: That in their last War with *England*, the *French* in *Europe* were so greatly distress'd, by a Current of yearly Losses, that they were glad to sit quiet where they might; but now 'tis much otherwise, as they appear rather in a Condition to give Laws to all their Neighbours: That our own *Indians* unhappily retiring Westward, have open'd a ready Road and Communication between this Province and

Canada, by their settling at *Allegheny*, a Branch of that great River *Mississipi ;* which Branch extending a thousand Miles from its Mouth, where it enters the said River, reaches even into this Province, and between its Waters and the western Branches of *Sasquehannah* there is but a small Land-Carriage: That the *French* exceedingly want such a Country as this to supply their Islands with Provisions, and our Rivers for an easier Inlet to that vast Country of *Louisiana*, which they possess on *Mississipi*, than they now have by the barr'd Mouth of it, which empties itself a great Way within the Shoal-Bay of *Mexico;* and they have many large Nations of *Indians* in Alliance with them to facilitate their Conquests. For all which Reasons, our numerous back Inhabitants, as well as others, ought to be obliged to furnish themselves with Arms, and to be disciplined as in other Colonies for their own proper Defence, which would be no manner of Charge to the Publick, and but little to Particulars.

These, I think, are the principal Arguments adduced by those who plead for a Law for Self-Defence: To which I shall add these other weighty Considerations, that may more particularly affect Friends as a People; The Government at Home, and particularly the Parliament, appear to have this present War very much at Heart, in which they spare no Charge in fitting out large Fleets, with Land-Forces, and expect that all their Colonies will in the same Manner exert themselves, as the Assemblies of all the others have in some Measure done, ours excepted, not only in their Contributions, but they have also generally a regular Militia for their Defence.

Our Friends have recommended themselves to the Government in *Britain*, not only by their peaceable Deportment, as has been already observed, but by complying with its Demands, in chearfully contributing by the Payment of their Taxes towards every War; yet they are admitted into no Offices of the Government above those of the respective Parishes where they live, except that some have undertaken to receive the Publick Money ; and tho' tolerated in their Opinions, as they interfere not with the Administration, yet these Opinions are

so far from being approved by the Government, that when they shall be urged as a Negative to putting so valuable a Country as this, and scituate, as has been mentioned, in a proper Posture of Defence, those who plead their Privileges for such a Negative, may undoubtedly expect to be divested of them, either by Act of Parliament, or a *Quo Warranto* from the King against their Charters; for it will be accounted equal to betraying it. And this, besides the irreparable Loss to ourselves, must prove a Reproach, and vast Disadvantage to the Profession every where.

'Tis alledged, the Governor made a false Step last Year in Encouraging or Suffering our Servants to inlist; for which he has been abridged by the Assembly of the Salary, for a Year and a half, that has for many Years before been allowed to our Governors. But as this is interpreted by the Ministry in *Britain*, as a Proof of an extraordinary Zeal for the King's Service, his Conduct herein, as also his Letter to the Board of Trade, however displeasing to us, will undoubtedly recommend him the more to the Regard of our Superiors, in whose Power we are; and accordingly we may expect to hear of it.

Our Province is now rent into Parties, and in a most unchristian Manner divided: Love and Charity, the great Characteristicks of the Christian Religion, are in a great Measure banished from amongst the People, and Contention too generally prevails. But, for the weighty Reasons that have been mentioned in this Paper, it is not to be doubted but that those who are for a Law for Defence, if the War continues, and the Country be not ruin'd by an Enemy before, must in Time obtain it: It is therefore proposed to the serious and most weighty Consideration of this Meeting, Whether it may not, at this Time, be advisable, that all such who for Conscience-sake cannot join in any Law for Self-Defence, should not only decline standing Candidates at the ensuing Election for Representatives themselves, but also advise all others who are equally scrupulous, to do the same; and as Animosities and Faction have greatly prevailed amongst us of late, and at all Times there prevails with too many an ill-judged, parsimonious Disposition, who for no other Reason

than to save their Money, but probably on some other Pretence, may vote for such as they may think, by their Opposition to the Governor, may most effectually answer that End ; that such Friends should give out publickly before hand, when they find they are named, that they will by no means serve tho' chosen, and accordingly that the Meeting recommend this to the Deputies from the several Monthly or Quarterly Meetings in this Province. All which, from the sincerest Zeal for the Public Good, Peace of the Country, and not only the Reputation, but the most solid Interest of Friends as a People, is (I say again) most seriously recommended to your Consideration, by

Your true Friend and Well-wisher,
J. L.

Stenton, Sept. 22. 1741.